

WORK ZONE

REDUCING MISHAPS BY 50%

Saving Your Eyesight

Maintainers have worked hard to reduce mishaps and injuries in many areas, but a review of CY2003 data shows that more needs to be done with aviation-related eye injuries.

Here are the stats (Remember these numbers reflect only what was reported, and we know this area historically is underreported):

Type Aircraft or Command:

P-3 – 19	Depot (Various) – 11
FA-18 – 6	SH-60 – 4
F-14 – 2	H-53 – 3
E-2 – 1	EA-6 – 1
A-4 – 1	C-9 – 1
S-3 – 1	H-46 – 1
Helo Wing – 1	

Items Causing Injury (Turco or aircraft-cleaning compounds are a chemical but are categorized as a soap):

Soap/Cleaning-20	Debris - 9
Objects - 9	Fluids - 7
Fuel - 4	Chemicals - 3

Photo by PH3 Joshua Word



What can be done to prevent these injuries?

- Always wear goggles during any task. Several of the eye-injury reports showed debris dropped while drilling or fluids spilled while applying chemicals as causes. Several people walked into stationary objects (panels, tools or equipment). An eye injury can happen when you least expect it.

- Use the right goggles for the right application. Most incidents involved people not wearing eye protection; however, several incidents involved Turco seeping through the goggles and into eyes. Sun, wind and dust (SWD) goggles are not intended to prevent chemical intrusion. Make sure the appropriate chemical goggles are available and used, when necessary. Spray Turco (cleaning compound), which is used for hand wipes, will irritate your eyes as much as the liquid, so wear goggles when wiping down aircraft.

- Post eye-danger signs and make sure eyewash stations are available and clearly marked, when and where possible.

- Build a culture that ensures eye protection is used at all times. Leaders must not accept that a task is safe because it is easy or short and that nothing will go wrong. We have plenty of proof the easy tasks give us the most problems and a high number of injuries.

What resources are available?

- Various MIMs will describe when and what eye protection is necessary.
- SWD goggles are available from a number of companies. The ESS tactical, desert and flight-deck goggles have shown great promise (read the fall 2003 issue for more information on these products). The ballistic lenses have prevented several potential eye injuries, including one a Marine would have suffered. He recently was hit with shrapnel in Iraq.
- Read and become familiar with your command's sight-conservation program.

How to solve? Wear your goggles anytime the slightest chance of injury exists. Choose and wear the right goggles in the right situations. Maintain situational awareness so your name isn't added to the injured list.

Photo by PHAN Geanine Ortiz



Photo by Cpl. Shawn C. Rhodes



Background photo by PH2 Shawn Eklund